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Minutes of a Policy Review Committee Meeting

Washington, May 14, 1980, 10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

1. Source: Carter Library, National Security Affairs, Staff Material, North/South, Thornton, Subject Files, Box 102, PRC: Argentina, 5/14/80, 5/80. Secret. Sent for information. The meeting took place in the White House Situation Room.
2. Memorandum of conversation not found. [~~searched SAS; nothing~~]
3. See Document XX [~~Issues paper, 5/12/80~~].
4. See Document XX [~~ZB-M de Hoz memcon, 5/6/80~~] and footnote 6, Document XX [~~Issues paper, 5/12/80~~].
5. A reference to the Yacyreta dam project.
6. In telegram 4057 from Buenos Aires, May 15, Castro noted that the idea of such an invitation had been raised with the GOA three times, and junta leaders had "responded without much enthusiasm," because "they don't see a visit as an unmixed blessing." (National Archives, RG 59, Central Foreign Policy File, D800240-0811) (S)
7. Brzezinski sent a Summary of Conclusions of this meeting to Carter on May 16; Carter approved them on May 19. In a note at the end of the Summary of Conclusions, Carter wrote: "I'm inclined to move faster." In a May 19 memorandum to Muskie, which enclosed the Summary of Conclusions, Brzezinski called Muskie's attention to Carter's note. In a May 22 memorandum to Brzezinski, Thornton enclosed a draft weekly report item for Carter which noted that an Interagency Group would meet "to develop specific courses of action flowing from the PRC recommendations. In the first instance, military contacts will be examined; this is one area where we can move somewhat more rapidly as you have directed." A note indicates that the weekly report item was not sent to Carter. (Carter Library, NSC Institutional Files, 1977-81, Box 80, PRC 141 Argentina 5/14/80) (S)

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2972 Add-on

MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

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INFORMATION

POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING
May 14, 1980

TIME AND PLACE: 10:30-11:15 a.m.; White House Situation Room

SUBJECT: Minutes -- PRC Meeting on Argentina (C)

PARTICIPANTS

State
Warren Christopher, Dep. Secretary
John Bushnell, Dep. Ass't. Secretary

Defense
W. Graham Claytor, Jr., Dep. Secretary
Frank Kramer, Principal Dep. Ass't. Secretary

Agriculture
James Starkey, Dep. Under Secretary

Commerce
Luther Hodges, Dep. Secretary
Abraham Katz, Ass't. Secretary for Internat. Economic Policy and Research

Energy
Woody Cunningham, Ass't. Secretary for Nuclear Energy

Arms Control and Disarmament
Spurgeon Keeny, Dep. Director
Richard Williamson, Nuclear Exports Div. Chief, Bureau of Nonproliferation

Joint Chiefs of Staff
Lt. General John Pustay

Central Intelligence
Jack Davis, NIO for Latin America

White House
David Aaron
Henry Owen

National Security Council
Thomas P. Thornton
Robert Pastor

[redacted] NR

[redacted] The only point of contact between the Soviet Union and Argentina that raises longer term concerns is a possible fishing agreement although

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Review on May 14, 2000
Extended by Zbigniew Brzezinski
Reason for Extension: NSC 1.13(e)

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even here the Argentine Government is moving to limit its impact on their people. In addition we are very much concerned about Argentinian/Soviet cooperation in United Nations organs. Originally the Argentinians only wanted to prevent the Montaneros from mobilizing Soviet and Cuban support against the GOA. Over time however this has developed into a cooperative vote trade-off between the two sides. In the coming months, Bushnell continued, Argentina will have a hard time taking any positive actions whatsoever due to the imminent retirement of President Videla. This is certainly true until the decision on a successor is made in September and probably the period of inaction will continue until early next year when a new government is in place. We will not be able to force major decisions on them in this time. In the shorter term the main issue is the Argentine fear of condemnation as a result of the report of the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. They might make some minor steps on the human rights front to avert condemnation.

[redacted] NR

Hodges asked whether Argentine human rights performance has improved.

Bushnell replied that there has been a major improvement but there are still gross violations and the system of repression remains in place. One could say that they have probably killed most of the people that they wanted to kill, but there are now fewer political prisoners and in some instances the rule of law is being followed better.

Hodges reported that the Argentine Economics Minister had assured him that the current economic policies would continue under a new government next year. Hodges pointed out that we have a great economic potential in relations with Argentina and we should do everything we can to maximize that.

[redacted] NR

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Hodges said he was encouraged by Christopher's summation, for the trends in human rights are important. The Commerce Department also supports Option B.

Aaron said that we needed a specific program to improve our relations. The options as stated in the paper are too static. Our goals should be first, [redacted] NR

[redacted] NR

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At the same time Aaron noted that there is no reason to improve relations dramatically with Argentina now directly after they have stuck their finger in our eye on the grain issue. We should make clear our irritation with them at this time and then pick up the pieces with a new administration when it comes into office. We will not be able to get very far with Videla. We should take the opportunity of the new administration, however, for turning a new page. If we move to improve our relations with them now we will simply not have the respect of the Argentinians.

Claytor said that he saw Option C as the desirable goal, less the repeal of the Humphrey-Kennedy Amendment which would be impossible. We should do all that we can with the Argentine military to restore relations between our two armed services.

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1. There is enough human rights progress to justify movement towards improvement in our relationship.

2. Over the next six months events will be conditioned by the electoral situation in Argentina.

3. We will also have to see whether we need to react to the Argentinian decision on grain.

These are short-term items which the Interdepartmental Group can review as it goes along. On the longer term:

4. If there is continued improvement in the human rights situation in Argentina we should seek improvement in our relations with the new regime.

   The Interdepartmental Group will work out in detail what this improvement might involve. 7

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